

NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS TELECONFERENCE SUMMARY

August 22, 1997

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) convened by telephone on Friday, August 22, 1997 at 1:30 p.m. The meeting was led by its Chair, Ms. Carol Batterton of the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission. A list of action items is provided as Attachment A and a list of participants is given in Attachment B.

Approval of minutes of the July 18, 1997 and July 21, 1997 meetings

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Welcome to new members

Dr. Hartwig, past chair, welcomed Barbara Finazzo, Region II, EPA and Ron Cada, Colorado, the new members of the board; Gary King, New Mexico, who replaces Brenda Collins; and Ken Jackson, New York, the new chair-elect. Ms. Jeanne Mourrain asked that each member send her a business card (including e-mail address) which she will use as reference.

Interaction of Program Policy and Structure Chair with Board of Directors

Ms. Mourrain proposed that Ms. Pauline Bouchard participate as an invited guest during the Board of Directors meetings because of the close link between the Program Policy and Structure committee's activities and some of the decisions the Board has to make. The Board agreed.

Solicitation of AARB Members

Ms. Bouchard reported that the application form and invitation had been completed and is ready to be posted on the bulletin board service (BBS). Ms. Mourrain will make corrections and post the form on the BBS. Names of possible candidates were solicited from the Board.

Recommendations from ELAB

Dr. Wilson Hershey, ELAB Co-chair, discussed the recommendations made by the ELAB. The Board agreed to assign the responsibility for each of the recommendations to the appropriate committee or to EPA for action.

Recommendation 1 - ELAB recommends that EPA prepare a working set of PT sample design criteria which meet Program Office requirements to be used by the Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB) to include, a minimum, concentration, interferences, media. **Assigned to EPA but endorsed by NELAC.**

Recommendation 2 - ELAB recommends that NELAC/NIST/EPA develop a protocol which can be used by the PTOB, through review and analysis of data, to assure program equivalence among PT providers. ELAB further recommends that this protocol be finalized as soon as possible to ensure the integrity of this program. **The Board moved to submit it to the PT Committee but endorsed the concept.**

Recommendation 3 - ELAB recommends that the periodic PT studies occur at fixed times throughout the year. ELAB further recommends that initial and remedial PT samples may be obtained outside this schedule. **Referred to the PT Committee.**

Recommendation 4 - A. ELAB recommends that the long range goal of NELAC be to develop a consistent approach to both scope of accreditation and PT program sample design, which recognizes the needs of the laboratories, the primary accrediting authorities, and the Agency, particularly with regard to performance based methods, similar technologies, and analytical capabilities. **Referred Item A to the PT and Policy and Structure Committees for review.**

B. ELAB recommends that the PTOB, during implementation of the PT program, require that each PT provider record and report PT results to both the accrediting authority and the PTOB on a method bases, by matrix and analyte. **Item B will be referred to the PT Committee.**

C. ELAB recommends that a task group monitor the impact on implementation of the discrepancy between PT program design and the scope of accreditation. **Item C was referred to the Board to be deferred until a later date.**

Recommendation 5 - ELAB recommends that there is consistency between NELAC standards and the EPA's PT Externalization program. **Has already been addressed by the Board and the Conference adopted it. The recommendation was referred to the PT Committee.**

Recommendation 6 - ELAB recommends that the proposed PT standards (including the Appendices) be adopted as presented. **This recommendation was voted on and done. No action needed.**

Recommendation 7 - ELAB recommends that the GLP decisions and the NELAP timeline be decoupled. ELAB further recommends that the GLP subcommittee report to the ELAB at the Interim Meeting with three options including a) status quo; b) Options 1+3+5; and c) lab accreditation. ELAB further recommends that ISO Guide 25 be explicitly considered to understand the value it offers to the GLP process. ELAB further recommends that the NELAC process be evaluated to identify the value added, if any. EPA will provide language to clarify that the NELAC Constitution and Bylaws reflect that decision-making and implementation of the GLP Program will continue as an exclusively federal program. The goal of this activity is to provide information to OECA and OPPTS

management for a decision regarding the direction of the GLP program. **NELAC agreed with this recommendation and asked the subcommittee for some more study.**

Recommendation 8 - ELAB recommends that before EPA promulgates a regulation, it must demonstrate and comment that MQOs are achievable using available measurement technology. **Referred to EPA with NELAC endorsement.**

Recommendation 9 - ELAB recommends that EPA demonstrate that any new or revised regulatory measurement requirements are achievable on samples that represent the same level of analytical challenge as the matrix for which the regulation is intended. (Ideally, this would be samples of the actual matrix to be monitored, as defined by the regulation.) **Referred to EPA with NELAC endorsement.**

Recommendation 10 - ELAB recommends tht EPA consider the following remaining important unresolved issues:

- PB Measurement System vs. PB method
- Sample matrix
- Method Validation
- Method Compliance
- Interlaboratory Comparability
- Cost
- Laboratory Client Relationship

Referred to EPA with NELAC endorsement.

Recommendation 11 - ELAB recommends that the initial approval of accrediting authorities should occur simultaneously. **Completed. Referred to the Transition Committee.**

Recommendation 12 - ELAB recommends that the first round of NELAC accreditation of laboratories by accrediting authorities should also occur simultaneously. **Completed.**

Recommendation 13 - ELAB recommends that prior to the designation of approved proficiency test (PT) sample providers as required by Chapter 2, accredited labs should be allowed to continue using existing PT sample providers. However, in the interim, frequency of PT sample analysis as required by Chapter 2 must be met. **Status Quo - whatever the states are doing now.**

Recommendation 14. ELAB recommends that chapter 6 be further defined regarding accrediting authority recognition of states to address the conflict of interest between public and private sector labs, with respect to a State laboratory conducting routine environmental testing analyses. Further definition will include the specific guidance to avoid conflict of interest for an above stated Accrediting Authority. **Referred to the**

Accrediting Authority Committee to make a recommendation to the Board.

Recommendation 15. ELAB recommends that the issue of primacy State laboratories in accrediting non-primacy State laboratories be referred to the Accrediting Authority Committee for further consideration. **Referred to the Accrediting Authority Committee to make a recommendation to the Board.**

Recommendation 16. ELAB strongly recommends a vote for adoption of the Standards with modifications as specified and passed by ELAB motions on July 28, 1997. **This recommendation was passed.**

Recommendation 17. ELAB recommends that EPA Program Offices become more active in NELAC and promulgate regulations that are consistent with the NELAC standards as appropriate. **Action referred to EPA.**

Post Mortem of NELAC III

A discussion of NELAC III was held. It was agreed that Ms. Mourrain and Ms. Barbara Finazzo would draft a policy on how to conduct the committee meeting in general. Ms. Batteron will appoint a new Parliamentarian. It was suggested that this person also train the Chairs of the Committees in proper procedures. In regard to the Assessor Training Manual and Checklist, the Board agreed that the committee should be given a deadline of November 1 so that the manual and checklist can be put on the Bulletin Board before the Interim Meeting in December.

It was agreed that Ms. Mourrain, Ms. Batterton, Dr. Hartwig and Dr. Jackson would discuss NELAC for hazardous waste laboratories on another conference call and try to construct a policy.

Gene Tatsch reported on the status of the planning for the Interim meeting. Hotels in the DC area are being contacted for availability during the first week of December (Dec. 2 - 5, 1997). Ms. Batteron reported that hotels in Dallas, Austin, and Houston are being contacted for NELAC IV.

Identification of Potential Accrediting Authorities

Ms. Mourrain suggested a review of the Intent Survey, checking to see if the states are still planning on applying for NELAC accreditation and that the Board needs to establish a minimum number needed to go ahead with accreditation. Also, information dissemination to groups now out of the loop was discussed. Ms. Finazzo stated that the regional laboratory directors would be meeting on September 21, 1997 and that they would be able to identify some of these areas and that they would also be able to help with the assessment of accrediting authorities.

Implementation Options for States

The Statutory or Regulatory Changes Action was discussed and Dr. Jackson agreed to reword the paragraph. Ms. Mourrain will post the document on the bulletin board and will also furnish the document to groups that have been missed.

Article for “Accreditation and Quality Assurance” journal

Ms. Mourrain is to contact Mr. Jerry Parr about writing an article for the journal.

Replacement Board Member for Pauline Bourchard

Ms. Batterton recommended and the Board approved the disbandment of the Coordination Ad Hoc Committee. She also recommended the appointment of Dr. James Pearson to fill Ms. Bourchard’s unexpired term on the Board. The appointment is subject to approval at the NELAC IV conference.

Communication with ECOS

Bob Stephens will be attending the next ECOS meeting.

Biweekly/monthly bulletin for the Bulletin Board Service (BBS)

Mr. Ted Coopwood will prepare a monthly status report for the bulletin board with input from Board members and committee chairs.

All agenda items that were not discussed at this meeting will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Action Items
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Item No.	Action	Date Completed
1.	All Board members are asked to mail a business card to Ms. Jeanne Mourrain. Be sure to include your e-mail address.	
2.	Ms. Mourrain will make correction in the AARB application form and post to the bulletin board.	
3.	Ms. Mourrain and Ms. Barbara Finazzo will devise a policy on how to conduct committee meetings.	
4.	Ms. Mourrain will schedule a conference call to include Ms. Batterton, Dr. Hartwig and Dr. Jackson to discuss NELAC for hazardous waste laboratory policy.	
5.	Ms. Finazzo will contact regional laboratory directors regarding identifying groups not presently aware of NELAC and about the possibility of their help with accrediting primary authorities.	
6.	Dr. Ken Jackson is to rewrite the Statutory or Regulatory Changes section in the draft "Implementation of NELAC by an Accrediting Authority."	
7.	Ms. Mourrain is to contact Mr. Parr regarding writing an article for "Accreditation and Quality Assurance" journal.	
8.	Mr. Coopwood will prepare a monthly status report for the bulletin board.	

List of Participants
NELAC Board of Directors Teleconference
August 22, 1997

Name	Affiliation	Telephone/FAX No.
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Pauline Bouchard Invited Guest	MN Dept. Of Health	Tel: 612-623-5331 Fax: 612-623-5514 email: pauline.bouchard@health.state.mn.us
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